

Message Text

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17
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 IO-13 DODE-00 NSC-05 H-02 /080 W
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R 281733Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6724
INFO COMICEDEFOR
CINCLANT
AMEMBASSYSCOPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSYSOSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USNATO 1493

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE REYKJAVIK 1421

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, MARR, IC, US, NATO
SUBJECT: SDP VOTES CONTINUED BACKING FOR IDF PRESENCE

1. DEBATE OVER LANGUAGE IN PARTY PLATFORM ON DEFENSE
RELATIONS WITH US PROVIDED ONLY FIREWORKS AT 37TH NATIONAL
CONVENTION OF ICELAND'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OCTOBER 22-
24.

2. SDP BACKERS OF NATO AND IDF PRESENCE (INCLUDING PARTY
CHAIRMAN AND ALTHING LEADER) HAD SUBMITTED STRONGLY
WORDED DEFENSE PLANK STATING THAT WORLD CONDITIONS
MADE IT "INESCAPABLE THAT ICELAND BE MEMBER OF NATO AND
THAT DEFENSE FORCE REMAIN." DRAFT WENT ON TO SAY THAT
SDP OPPOSED TAKING RENT FROM US FOR USE OF DEFENSE
FACILITIES, SINCE PROVISION OF THESE FACILITIES IS
ICELAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL DEFENSE. ACCORDING TO
MEMBER OF SDP CENTRAL COMMITTEE(WHO IS ALSO EDITOR OF
PARTY'S NEWSPAPER) THIS LANGUAGE REPRESENTED MAXIMUM
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POSITION OF NATO/IDF SUPPORTERS, WHO PRESENTED IT KNOWING

IT WOULD BE WATERED DOWN. OTHER ELEMENTS OF PARTY, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY DISENCHANGED WITH SDP'S POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR PRESENCE OF US FORCES.

3. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DEBATE IN COMMITTEE AND ON FLOOR, STATEMENT ON DEFENSE WAS ADOPTED WHICH SAID "CONVENTION CONSIDERS IT LOGICAL WITH RESPECT TO ICELAND'S SECURITY AND THE OUTLOOK IN WORLD AFFAIRS THAT ICELAND SHOULD, FOR THE TIME BEING, SEEK STRENGTH IN DEFENSE ALLIANCE WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND TAKE PART IN THE MUTUAL DEFENSES OF THE NATO NATION. THE CONVENTION ALSO URGES ALERTNESS FOR THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO ALLOW THE DEFENSE FORCE TO LEAVE ICELAND WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE NATION'S SECURITY, AND RECOMMENDS THAT SUCH DECISION BE PUT TO A NATIONAL REFERENDUM."

4. BY VIRTUE OF THIS RATHER EQUIVOCAL LANGUAGE, SDP REMAINS ONE OF TWO ICELANDIC POLITICAL PARTIES OFFICIALLY SUPPORTING CONTINUED PRESENCE OF US DEFENSE FORCE. ON OTHER HAND, CONVENTION WENT ALONG WITH LEFTIST/YOUTH DEMANDS THAT DEFENSE COMMITMENT NOT BE MENTIONED IN MORE PERMANENT CONTEXT OF PARTY'S NEW CONSTITUTION, ALSO ADOPTED AT MEETING.

5. IN OTHER CONVENTION DEVELOPMENTS, SDP REELECTED WITH LITTLE OR NO OPPOSITION ALL TOP PARTY LEADERS, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN BENEDIKT GRONDAL AND SECRETARY BJORN JONSSON (ICELANDIC FEDERATION OF LABOR PRESIDENT). IN EVIDENT RESPONSE TO RECENT WIDESPREAD ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICAL SCANDAL AND CORRUPTION IN ICELAND (ALLEGATIONS WHICH SDP HAS HAD KEY ROLE IN FOSTERING) PARTY AGREED TO MAKE CERTAIN DISCLOSURES OF FINANCIAL RECORDS AND TO OPEN UP ITS NOMINATING PROCESS BY USE OF PRIMARY ELECTIONS AS REPLACEMENT FOR SMOKE-FILLED ROOM METHOD CURRENTLY EMPLOYED.
BLAKE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS, MILITARY AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 OCT 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976REYKJA01421
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760403-1265
From: REYKJAVIK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976109/aaaaagzc.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SDP VOTES CONTINUED BACKING FOR IDF PRESENCE
TAGS: PINT, MARR, IC, US, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006